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# HEART LYRICS

JESSIE F. O'DONNELL

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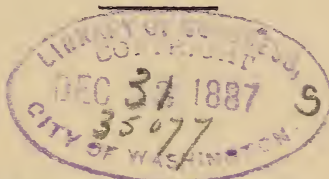
# HEART LYRICS

BY

JESSIE F. O'DONNELL

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting  
On the shifting  
Currents of the restless heart.

—Longfellow.



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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
NEW YORK



TO MY FATHER  
"HEART LYRICS"  
IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

---

*The incense burned by the lily  
Just hints at its heart ;  
The rose of its secret beauty  
Reveals but a part.*

*There's rhythm divine in its sweetness  
The soul hears alone ;  
And the warmest thought of the loving  
Must still be unknown.*



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## HEART LYRICS.

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### THE NIGHT-BLOOMING CEREUS.

THE indolent four-o'clock ladies  
Had waked from their long, dreamy rest,  
But the sun-flower's golden-lashed blossoms  
Had turned their brown eyes to the west,  
And the lilies grown suddenly weary,  
Lay hushed on the river's cold breast.

The blue-bells began a soft tinkle,  
The primroses opened their eyes ;  
And the grasses waved low where the fairies  
Had stolen the violets' disguise ;  
And above, through the angels' vast gardens,  
The stars blossomed out in the skies.

A voice from the lily-bells calling,  
Rang out on the even air clear :  
“ O ye blossoms ! awake, in the gardens !  
The Lord of the flowers cometh near !  
O awake ! in the field and the woodland ;  
The Maker of blossoms is here ! ”

The poppy just murmured : “ I ’m sleepy ! ”  
And nodded her round, drowsy head ;  
And the tulips had closed their bright shutters  
“ Against the night dew-drops,” they said ;  
And the little green balls of the daisies  
Never stirred in their soft, grassy bed.

But sweetly the tall, fragrant lily  
Uplifted her chalice of light,  
And the roses threw open their bosoms  
And gladdened the fair summer night,  
And the stars of the jasmine blossoms  
Leaned down from the trellises’ height.

The Lord, walking slow through the garden,  
Smiled back at the rose’s perfume,  
Caressing the lily’s pale petals,  
Or shaking the hyacinth’s plume,

Till He came where the Cereus slumbered,  
Close-hiding her beautiful bloom.

She thrilled at the heavenly presence,  
And slowly uncovered her face,  
And swinging the pearl of her censer,  
With reverent, ineffable grace,  
Stood revealed in her magical beauty,  
The soul of that wonderful place.

Spellbound at the white, growing vision,  
The Lord watched the flower unfold,  
Till away from the quivering stamens  
The last snowy petal had rolled,  
Then He bent o'er the weird, witching blossom,  
Left a kiss on its bosom of gold.

All tremulous with the keen rapture,  
And rich with the Master's breath,  
"Not one lesser touch shall defile me!"  
The night-blooming Cereus saith,  
And gathering her garments about her,  
She yielded her sweetness to death.

Whenever a Cereus blossoms,  
'T is said that the Master is nigh,  
That He watches the glorious flower  
    Uncurl the gold stamens that lie  
In the petals that tremble with rapture,  
    And shut round His kiss when they die.



## A WHITE EASTER.

OH! the wondrous, glistening Easter,  
Shining in the morning light!  
Silently the world had blossomed,  
Like a white rose in the night;  
Softly smiled the winter landscape  
To the sunbeam's glances bright.

Then I knew the wild Ice-Spirit  
Swift this marvel great had wrought;  
Crystal robes for trees and bushes  
In the darkness he had brought,  
While the rainbow's gorgeous colors  
Diamondèd fringes caught.

Every tree wore jewelled flowers,  
Flashing like a monarch's crown,  
All the tiny twigs and branches  
With a weight of gems bent down,

And the slender, stately pine-trees  
Had to crystal columns grown.

“He is risen!” soft the maples  
To the hearts that listened saith,  
Pointing fingers white to Heaven,  
“He has conquered even Death!”  
“He is risen!” sparkling crystals  
Echoed in their frosty breath.

And if ever speech were silver,  
Then it was, as clear and sweet,  
“He is risen!” all the ice-sprays  
Seemed to joyously repeat,  
While they swayed in Easter sunlight,  
And dropped jewels at our feet.

“He is risen!” cried our glad hearts,  
“Death’s mysterious veil unrolls,  
And forever Death’s dark kingdom  
He has conquered and controls!”  
And were ever silence golden,  
’T was the stillness in our souls.

## AN EASTER HYMN.

FROM snow-drops at the altar laid,  
Like pure maidens kneeling,  
As tho' of its own sound afraid,  
A fairy voice comes stealing:  
"Christ is risen!" whispers sweet,  
"Death lies conquered 'neath his feet."

The Easter lilies, tall and slight,  
Their golden anthers gleaming,  
Within their waxen bosoms white  
Of holy things are dreaming,  
Stirring softly, say apart:  
"Blessed are the pure in heart!"

Triumphant o'er the empty tomb,  
The Easter-tide denoting,  
The violets' rich purple bloom  
Sends clouds of fragrance floating,  
To each heart this message gives:  
"Know that thy Redeemer lives!"

## A VALENTINE.

HAVE you counted the thistle's wandering  
flakes

That the wind scatters lightly 'round him?  
Or the plumes that the gray old dandelion  
shakes

From the feathery wreath that crowned him?  
Do you know how often the daisies  
Have tempted the wind to woo?  
Or the rose has blushed at his praises?—  
Then number my thoughts of you.

Can you measure a blue-bird's quivering flight?  
Or the speed of a homesick swallow,  
When the sunbeams have fled far south in the  
night,

And the birds and the wild bees follow?  
Do you think, while watching them winging  
So fast down their pathway blue,

That my thoughts as swiftly are swinging  
World-over to follow you?

Have you looked in the violets' innocent eyes?  
Have the lilies breathed once o'er you?  
Have they opened their fragrant hearts to the  
skies?

And kissed the June breeze before you?  
Have you heard the voices of showers  
Go murmuring all night through  
A rhythm of love to the flowers?—  
So sweet are my thoughts of you.

Have you watched the blooms by zephyrs be-  
guiled  
From the apple-trees gently stealing?  
Have you seen o'er the weary eyes of a child  
The lashes drop slumberous healing?  
Do you know how soft the caresses  
From lips of the gracious dew,  
That fall on the blossoms it blesses?—  
So tender my thoughts of you.

You remember how surely violets will greet  
The first steps of the joyous summer;

And you know how the daisies spring 'round  
the feet

Of the radiant, welcome comer.

The ripe fruit brings gold to September,

And roses to June are true ;—

And my thoughts, belovèd, remember

Are faithful as these to you

## REGRET.

Do you believe the violets  
Are missed by summer greatly?  
When daisies come the wind forgets  
The flowers he loved so lately.  
When lilacs bloom, and lilies, too,  
How can he to one plant be true?

I do not think the flowers care  
That last week's rose is faded,  
Or that the wind leaves branches bare  
Which once green blossoms shaded.  
Each sun-lit morn new blooms unclosed;  
Why waste regrets on one dead rose?

Dim grows the gold in evening skies,  
The red light faintly flushes,  
The purple shadow pales and dies  
Where glow the sun's last blushes;

The night his mantle gray puts on,  
And gives no thought to glories gone.

But ever weary hearts turn back  
To spring's violets ; and roses  
That bloom to-day forever lack  
The fragrance youth discloses ;  
And memories of first love's gold  
Will flash across life's twilights cold.

For hearts, howe'er they try to crush  
The thoughts that stir and cry,  
Will learn 't is vain to hide and hush  
The things that never die ;  
And though for years they 've stilled regret,  
The strong old love can rouse it yet.



## A SISTER'S THOUGHT IN MARCH.

OH! the sweet, sweet things  
The Earth hides in her breast!  
'Neath the snow that clings  
Like a vapor which the sun  
Seeks to peer through,—but there's one  
Sweeter than the rest.

There are daisy-stars  
And perfumed violets:  
When the spring unbars  
Winter's gate, the Earth will wake  
All the sweets kept for her sake,  
But the dearest yet.

There is life that stirs  
Within the dull brown Earth;  
The old world is hers  
To make young again. Will she

One fair bloom awake for me  
At the flowers' birth?

The most precious trust  
The Earth hides in her breast,  
To my heart, is just  
A tiny, white-robed child,  
To the Earth's brown breast beguiled,  
Fairer than the rest.

Tiny sister ! when  
The Earth sends flowers up,  
Will you greet me then ?  
Has your soul passed to the rose ?  
Will your eyes their blue uncloze  
In the violet's cup ?

Will your fingers light  
A welcome to me wave  
From the daisies' white ?  
And your breath the lilies flood  
When the dandelions stud  
With their gold your grave ?

O kind Earth ! when wakes  
    The spring-time at thy call,  
And the green sod breaks  
    Into blossoms 'neath the sun,  
In thy joy, forget not one  
    Sweeter than them all !

## THISTLE-DOWN.

O THISTLE-DOWN! Soft thistle-down!  
A breath dispels thy dainty snow;  
The softest of all winds that blow  
May carry wide from each roadside  
The treasure of the thistle-down.

O thistle-down! Fair thistle-down!  
A thousand wingèd fancies spring  
Into my idle thoughts, and bring  
Uncontrolled, memories old  
Of days as fair as thistle-down.

O thistle-down! Light thistle-down!  
In olden, golden summer hours,  
Through meadows sweet with opening flowers,  
My light heart blest with peaceful rest,  
I walked amidst the thistle-down.

O thistle-down ! Wild thistle-down !  
Your barbs have stung my careless breast,  
You fill my soul with wild unrest ;  
Tearful I gaze *these* summer days  
On silver of the thistle-down.

O thistle-down ! False thistle-down !  
Your beauty mocks my sense of pain ;  
My faith, my trust, your barbs have slain,  
For friends who seemed true as I dreamed,  
Are false and light as thistle-down !

O thistle-down ! Barbed thistle-down !  
Scatter thy flakes o'er hill and lea ;  
Thy barbs alone remain with me ;—  
Love, friendship, faith ; joy, life, and death,  
Are nothing but barbed thistle-down.

## A-SAILING.

A-SAILING ! a-sailing !  
Throughout the golden day ;  
Skimming white waves of the silver tide,  
Over clear depths where the sunbeams hide,  
Sailing away.

A-sailing ! a-sailing !  
To find the sunset's glow ;  
Gliding afar from the dusty world,  
Watching the billows with foam-wreaths curled,  
Sailing I go.

A-sailing ! a-sailing !  
Into the crimson west,  
Turning away from the cares that fret,  
Worry and weariness I forget,  
Sailing to rest.

A-sailing ! a-sailing !  
One star, my guide, above,  
Hasting away to a heart that waits,  
I, spurning the sea that separates,  
Sail to my love.

## DREAM LACE.

### A LEGEND OF VENICE.

IN wondrous Venice, in the olden time,  
That fairy city that the amorous sea  
Holds closest in his arms, while nestling 'gainst  
His breast, she hears the mighty, slow heart-  
throbs

Which ever in her beauty or decay  
Beat true to her,—there dwelt 'midst palaces  
And stately temples springing from the sea,  
A maid whose loveliness outshone them all,  
As shines San Marco over hovels rude.  
A slender, stately column was this girl,  
Supporting with her maiden strength a home  
Where love walked resolute with poverty,  
And uncomplaining shared his comrade's load.  
For skilful with her needle was Constance,  
And weaving endless yards of precious lace,  
She raised the sinking fortunes of her house.



Now many looked with favor on the girl,  
As through the narrow streets she made her  
way,

To take her laces to some royal dame ;  
Or sitting at the window bent her head  
(A golden glory with the waving hair ! )  
Above some graceful pattern that she traced,—  
A lovely picture in the casement framed,  
Wrought by the Artist God, whose tints divine  
Are mixed in Heaven. When an earthly hand  
Can take the sunlight's gold, the blue of skies,  
From daybreak clouds the snow, the crimson  
flush ;

Can take a rose's heart, a lily's soul,  
And therefrom form a maiden, then indeed !  
Can one dare hope to rival God's sweet work.  
The fair Constance a talisman possessed  
To guard her heart 'gainst those who sought  
her hand

(Some noble men among them), and from those  
Venetian gallants, who with subtle art  
Would win her love and careless cast her by,  
As one might throw an empty shell away  
From which he 's ta'en the pearl. This magic  
charm

Was love. A sailor youth had won her heart  
When first she left her girlhood's narrow room  
And stood within the spacious court which  
leads

To womanhood. He to the Eastern Seas  
Had sailed, but left her life so full of him  
That other men but breathing shadows seemed.  
When some adorer from his sable barque  
Beneath her window trilled a wild love song,  
She opened not her shutters to the night,  
Nor gave him greetings soft. She only thought  
His voice less sweet than one she loved so well.  
Sometimes a daring lover, sailing by,  
Tossed glowing flowers upon her broken steps,  
Or through the open window where she toiled,—  
Carnations, burning their red lives away,  
Or roses, folding fragrant leaves around  
A lover's hopes. But dearer far she kept  
Some withered violets that her sailor love  
Had placed in her bright hair with tender pride,  
And whispered that the blossoms could not  
miss

The sunshine there. The oceans which between  
Them widened could not make their souls  
seem far.

When from his first long voyage he returned,  
He brought Constance, wrapped in a silken  
scarf,

A spray of coralline of branching shape,  
Whose graceful curves and radiating lines  
A fragile bit of wondrous beauty formed.

"'T is lace the laughing mermaids weave,"  
said he,

"From silky sea-weeds tangled o'er with pearls.  
In shell-strewn caves which echo with their song  
They sit with golden shuttles through the day  
And fashion lovely sprays of coral lace.

O dainty little hands!" he laughed, and kissed  
The soft magnetic fingers, one by one,

"You weave most wondrous tissues, but your  
skill

Is naught to that of mermaids." Light his  
words,

And tender was his tone, but in her heart  
A touch of pique there lingered, that he should  
Extol a mermaid over her in aught.

So when once more he left her for the sea,  
She studied long the plume-like coralline,  
And murmured: "I will form a fairer thing;  
My bridal veil shall be of mermaid lace."

She gathered dripping sea-weeds from the  
beach,  
And coralline, and wavy, curving shells,  
To serve as patterns for her graceful work,  
And many a sea-born thing she wrought  
therein :

Quaint blossoms from the ocean-gardens deep ;  
Sea-stars, whose five straight-pointed rays disdain  
The mazy tangles of the drift-weed sprays ;  
And tiny monsters, too, grotesque and strange.

So, day by day, the magic texture grew  
Beneath the maiden fingers skilled by love,  
A life-long practice, and an artist's eye.  
And every leisure hour which came to her  
Over her work with earnest face she bent,  
Her pretty fingers flying with the threads ;  
And as she wrought, quaint visions came to her  
Of ocean-caves where wondrous mosses grew,  
Where brilliant sea-weeds spread a glowing net  
Across the rocky walls that gleam with pink  
And pearl. Some little spray would bring her  
thoughts

Of fairy, floating forests in the sea,  
Where carmine tints die in the fainter rose,

Where olive grows to brown, and rust-like spots  
Of vivid yellow glow amid the green.

Then wondrous stories that her lover told  
Of worlds beneath the tropic ocean's wave,  
Like salt sea-foam, came drifting to her mind :  
Of breathing blossoms, rainbow-hued and fair,  
That stretch fine, thread-like arms to seize their  
prey ;

Of deadly living nettles floating on  
The billows ; of the chambered nautilus,  
That tiny, fearless navigator who  
Sails o'er the seas in fairy skiffs of pearl.  
Strange serpents slid along her misty dreams,  
And wound their shining coils around her  
threads ;

And elf-like faces peered thro' tufted weeds,  
And waving arms seemed stretched to draw  
her in,  
And many weird and phantom shapes besieged  
Her terror-stricken fancy.

Spectral gleams  
Played through the mesh-like tangle of her  
thoughts

From light-emitting fishes, golden stars,  
Hung in the under world to cheer its gloom.  
Some silver spangles shone or jewels glowed  
With opal tints ; some, fiery torches, threw  
Their dazzling splendor in the coral caves  
Where danced the water-nymphs ; some mer-  
maids bore

To light their way to lonely sea-girt rocks,  
Where white and luminous these sirens sit  
And answer with wild song the albatross,  
Or lure some heedless sailor to his doom.  
And then her thoughts would wander from the  
sea

To lovely women hid in misty veils,  
To white-armed maidens at the royal court  
Whose beauty by her needle was enhanced,  
To children careless of the costly lace  
With which fond mothers draped their rounded  
limbs.

At length, the magic veil was finished, and,  
Indeed, 't was wondrous lovely, seeming  
wrought  
By fairy fingers from the white sea-foam.  
Across it crumpled threads of sea-weed lay,



And coral branches fell like shadows there,  
And shells inwrought with many a sinuous  
curve

Were traced throughout the filmy cobweb  
mesh,

As though a dream from out the sea was born.

And when she wore it on her wedding-day,

The people cried, as to St. Mark's she passed:

"'T is Aphrodite sprung from ocean foam!"

The wonder of all Venice it became,

And princesses and noble dames sought out

The young lace-worker, till Venetian point,

Which she, to please her lover's fancy, first

Had wrought, was worn at court by kings and  
queens,

And soon became the pride of all the world.

## GOLDEN-ROD.

YOU have stolen your plumes from the sunshine,  
O troops of fairy elves brave !  
And it gleams in your sceptres of splendor  
That light o'er meadow-lands wave.

From our hearts you have cruelly stolen  
The warmth that loving thoughts gave,  
For your golden and beautiful blossoms  
Are blooming over a grave.



## SONG OF AUTUMN.

OH ! sing me a song of autumn,  
That sweetest and saddest refrain  
That softly from nature's fingers  
Is throbbing in chords of pain.

A song of the early Autumn :  
She 's waiting, a matron fair,  
Her feet gleaming white from vine leaves,  
The grape-clusters thick in her hair.

Your voice must be rich with music,  
Must deepen, and sparkle, and glow  
As sweet as the waves of ocean,  
When murmuring melodies low.

A song of the splendid autumn ;  
Of trees dressed in scarlet and brown,  
Of haze that is warm and sun-burnt,  
Of leaves that come hastening down.

With mirth let your song go ringing,  
Be merry and wild and as free  
As leaves that are tossed and tumbled  
About in the light wind's glee.

A song of the autumn's pathos,  
When leaves begin to die,  
The wind to them calling softly  
To come from their homesteads high.

And loosening their hold on branches,  
They flutter to his dear embrace ;  
A moment he 'll love them gaily,  
And pleased with their wonderful grace,

In passionate dances whirl them ;  
But when they grow faded and dim,  
Will leave them to fall by roadsides,  
And die for the love of him.

A song of the close of autumn,  
How all things prophesy death ;  
The fields that are stript of harvest,  
The wind's ice-laden breath.

A song how the matron Autumn  
    Stands watching with dark, cloudy eyes,  
The dim, dreary change of her forests,  
    The sad gray mists of the skies.

Low night-winds should thrill the measure,  
    While wandering restlessly by,  
Till the song should grow faint and falter,  
    With shudder, and sob, and with sigh.

The notes should fall softly, gravely,  
    The music grow weary and slow,  
And die like the tender blossoms,  
    With the burden of Autumn's woe.

## AN OCTOBER DAISY.

WHEN glad October's mists bestow  
On earth a softened light,  
And asters bud and dahlias blow,  
A daisy-bud unfolded slow  
Its quivering petals white.  
It gazed with a bewildered air  
Upon the maple's branches bare,  
And watched the playful breezes throw,  
On the brown grass, like gems aglow,  
The autumn leaflets bright.

The daisy cried : " I 've bloomed at last !  
Though held all summer long,  
Through sunny days that weary passed,  
By tiny arms which kept me fast,  
Of sepals, slim and strong,  
Up from their clinging, close embrace,  
I to the sunshine lift my face ! "

The daisy paused, her heart aghast,  
A startled look around she cast,—  
Somehow, the world seemed wrong.

In vain she sought for dimpled May,  
Her path with violets strewn,  
And called the autumn sunbeams gay,  
Throughout October's lands astray,  
For news of winsome June.  
“ I loved you ever, sunbeams dear,  
I often felt your warm breath near,  
Through prison-bars it found its way.  
Oh ! why could not the Summer stay ?  
Why did she leave so soon ?

“ The wind came near my cell to woo,  
With news of sweetest things,  
'Twixt Heaven and Earth he lightly flew,  
'Twixt grass of green and skies of blue,  
Rare perfume on his wings,  
Of swelling buds and singing birds,  
Who woo and coo with winning words  
Of pebbly brooks he told me, too,  
He ever whispered something new,  
For tales from far he brings.

“ The rain-drops said my comrades bold  
Should be the kingcups wild ;  
We 'd watch the dandelions grow old,  
Who flaunt their waving tresses gold  
At foot of every child.  
The dew-drops told of mosses soft  
That lift their scarlet cups aloft,  
With nectar full as they can hold,  
And how the clover-blooms unfold,  
To kiss the breezes mild.

“ I even hoped,” the daisy said,  
“ When hedges were ablaze,  
To catch a glimpse of roses red  
Who royally rich perfume shed  
On country roadside ways.  
But now the song of Summer 's done  
And Autumn's funeral chant 's begun.”  
The flower sadly bowed her head,  
And tears fell on the grasses dead  
Through Autumn's yellow haze.

“ I saw, when but a bud half-blown,  
A sister blossom lie  
Midst fallen petals ; its beauty flown,

A crisp, brown husk is left alone,  
With swaying stem close by.  
The sunshine says that withered thing  
Holds seeds that into daisies spring,  
That winds the flower-germs have sown,  
That daisies all from seeds have grown,  
I wonder must I die ?

“ O blame me not, October great ! ”  
She prayed the month fruit-crowned ;  
“ I did not mean to bloom so late,  
I struggled, but was forced to wait,  
By cruel sepals bound.  
I know I ’m strange to your domain,  
But, gracious month of glory ! deign  
To welcome me ; ’t is desolate  
To blossom now and find no mate  
In these strange flowers around.”

October kissed the daisy small :  
“ Thou ’rt welcome, Marguerite,  
In darkness hearing sunbeams call,  
Thou brave undidst the sepals all,  
Thy little friends to greet.  
Why is thy heart filled with regrets



For June's rose-buds or violets ?  
Thy birthday glows with tints of fall,  
And see the oaks and maples tall  
Drop gold flakes at thy feet.

“ The woods have stolen with cunning theft  
Tints from the painted west ;  
The chestnut-burs by frost are cleft,  
From motherhood of trees bereft,  
They nestle on Earth's breast,  
The wheat 's asleep in golden hush,  
The woodbine glows a shamefaced blush,  
While climbing the elm, by fingers deft,  
To see if careless hang-birds left  
Their speckled eggs in nest.

“ The snowy blossom you saw fade  
Shall bloom in other birth ;  
It gave its life to seeds that strayed  
From the dry husk you watched, dismayed,  
Down to the moistened earth.  
They 'll gather life in midst of death  
And strength from spring-time's life-fraught  
breath ;  
The soil and sun and dew will aid



To cradle their sweet lives in shade ;—  
Oh ! all of life 't is worth

“ To learn how from their winter sleep  
In dark and mystery,  
Their buds will into sunshine peep,  
And out of dim graves slyly creep  
Awake in ecstasy !  
Then mourn not at the wondrous change  
From dainty bud to seedling strange ;  
Rather learn well this lesson deep,  
How all from slumbrous death shall leap  
To immortality ! ”

## WHEN HIS HEART DIED.

IN the warm autumn his heart died :  
    Maples were changing to gold ;  
Happy the flush of the woodbine  
    Reddened the trellises old,  
And the blue mists gathered slow,  
In the autumn, long ago.

Lingering stood the fair Summer,  
    Slow were her feet to depart ;  
Never again would her beauty  
    Wake chords of praise in his heart ;  
Frosts were calling her away,  
Yet she waited day by day.

Gently the warm-hearted Summer,  
    Whispered the coming of Death ;  
(Shivered a heart in the sunlight,  
    Chilled by his cold, frozen breath !)

Keen her words were like a knife,  
Piercing to the soul of life.

Fiercely he cried in defiance :  
“ Hearts and their love are divine !  
Never shall Death's dread fingers  
Close on these heart-strings of mine !  
Life was never yet so sweet,  
Love has made its joy complete.”

Winds, blowing cold 'gainst the Summer,  
Warned him that Death had come near ;  
Covering his heart with her garments—  
Cried he the winds : “ Blow not here !  
Love like mine holds Death at bay,—  
God will ne'er waste hearts that way ! ”

Then from stern Heaven came fire,  
Shrieking, the false Summer fled !—  
Shivered his life 'neath God's anger,  
Stricken, his frail heart lay dead ;  
In the lightning glare bereft,  
Love-forsaken was he left.

Hidden away in a casket,  
Pansies lie, dewy and dark,

Over his heart's dead emotions,  
Nothing their deep grave to mark.  
Mingling in the world's grim strife,  
What has he to do with life ?

Searching 'midst nature's rare secrets,  
Intellect keen as of old,  
Interest eager enlisted,  
Only his heart lying cold,  
With its frozen faith and trust ;  
'Neath the faded pansies' dust,

Thought in his brain still is active,  
Sympathies warm yet and true ;  
Died but his heart with the Summer,  
When the cold wind 'gainst them blew ;  
When the soft mists gathered slow,  
In the autumn long ago.

## COMPLETION.

“ O LOVE ! ” cried the happy October,  
To a maple, stately and fair,  
“ Thy green robes are darksome and sober  
For one of thy beauty to wear.  
For that form, so gracefully slender,  
Should wear tints gorgeous and bright.  
I will bring thee dresses of splendor,  
I will bring thee jewels of light ;  
The colors that glow in the heaven,  
The red of the rose shall be thine ;  
By my hand shall thy beauty be given,  
And thus shall its glory be mine.”

So he gathered the sunshine of summer :  
From the dandelions' tresses their gold,  
From the buttercup, June's early comer,  
The light which her chalices hold.

From the wheat and the starry daisies,  
And the fields of yellowing corn,  
And the golden-rod's sun-tangled mazes,  
Where the first hint of autumn is born.  
From all these he took golden glintings ;  
And next he sought purple of kings,  
That fades in the violets' tintings,  
And flashes from butterflies' wings,  
From asters that glow in the meadows,  
And orchids, those radiant things !  
And the deeper purple of shadows  
That night from the mountain top flings.

Then his heart with gladness elated,  
With hands that were trembling, though  
bold,  
He ran where the maple tree waited,  
And robed her in purple and gold.  
With the crimson spars of the clover,  
And the poppy-blooms' scarlet flame.  
He jewelled the slender arms over,  
Till roses blushed redder for shame.

But alas ! for the eager lover !  
Alas ! that the splendor should fail !

For the tints he had thrown above her  
Grew fainter and sombre and pale.  
Then he cried : " I will find Life's power,  
Mystery born of living things :  
Life that throbbing in bird and flower,  
To them marvellous beauty brings."

Then he gathered the clear, pale yellow-  
From canary-birds' downy breasts,  
And the orange hues, warm and mellow,  
The king-birds keep hid in their crests.  
And the warblers sang, yellow-throated,  
" Take our tints," making sunshine cold ;  
And the wood-duck dreamily floated,  
Giving him lights of greenish gold.  
Then with emeralds he decked her  
From the fiery humming-bird,  
And with crimson rubies flecked her,  
But the jewels grew pale and blurred  
So he caught the magical sweetness  
Of a baby's innocent flush ;  
Held the swift and splendid fleetness  
Of a woman's passionate blush.  
But alas ! some strange faintness ever  
Made the colors seem pale and cold,



And the maples' draperies never  
    Changed to crimson hues, or gold.

Then the Frost King came forth unbidden,  
    From the purple October mist,  
Where his shining face was hidden,  
    And the maple tree coldly kissed.  
Then the maple grew faint and quivered,  
    And thrilled with mysterious pain,  
At the touch of his pale lips shivered,  
    For they left a crimson stain.  
But behold ! a marvellous, glowing  
    Beauty fell from the frost-kiss dread,  
Changed her draperies green to flowing  
    Robes of richest purple and red.  
As he watched her loveliness growing,  
    Sad October's brown eyes grew dim,  
All her beauty feeling, knowing,  
    But alas ! not beautiful for him.  
For he thought another had won her,  
    By the spell of his icy breath,  
And the jewels showered upon her  
    Were the signets and seals of Death.  
But the soul of the tree was leaping  
    With a sense of God-given power,



For she knew by the love through her creeping,  
She never had lived till that hour!

To a heart Life brought all his treasures,  
Of laughter, and music, and mirth;  
Brought joys that were stingless, and pleasures  
That gladdened the beauties of earth;  
Brought ideals and wonderful visions,  
And meetings with rapture replete;  
Brought beauty and earthly elysians;  
Brought her hopes and promises sweet.  
Then he gave her achievements splendid,  
And truths with no touch of deceit,  
And struggles in victories ended,  
And strength never crushed with defeat.  
A new joy to the heart he brought then  
From a friendship tender and fine,  
And a magical wonder wrought then  
With a love that was half-divine.  
But no hint from the heart there gleamed of  
The true loveliness that endears,  
The soul-beauty that Life had dreamed of,  
Till he brought her the gift of tears.  
O strange! that no joy could so move her!  
No joy but a terrible pain!

For when Sorrow bent low above her,  
Like a rose-bud after rain,  
Bloomed the heart in radiant splendor,  
All her loveliness opened wide,  
Made by suffering more tender,  
Softened, strengthened, glorified !  
And by Pain's mysterious teaching,  
The last blessing Life could give,  
Through the dark, bereft hands reaching  
Unto God, she learned to live.

## TREE SILHOUETTES.

No sight in nature is more dear to me  
Than, dark outlined against a winter sky,  
The slender branches of some leafless tree  
Embossed upon the neutral background lie.

I love the trees, when June's green masses hide  
The happy bird that for his home nest sings,  
And when to fly through field and forest wide,  
The autumn leaves unfold their gorgeous  
wings.

But from the restless naked boughs I gain—  
Whose every twig stands sharp against the  
light—  
An inner pleasure woven through with pain,  
As sable threads may run through textures  
bright.

Sometimes, a fairy labyrinth they seem ;  
In vain I try to follow each dark line,  
But as in mazy windings of a dream  
I lose my way within the network fine.

When by the winds of winter tossed about,  
With frantic shrieks and sullen, moaning cries,  
The bare limbs seem like pleading arms held out  
For mercy to the unresponsive skies.

At times, a tender, glowing hue will flush  
The clouds—'gainst which the clinging  
branches rest—  
The rose-heart's color, as a girl will blush  
When some love-fancy stirs her happy breast.

Or pale and soft, a golden light will steal  
Behind the graceful branches, that upraise  
Their prayerful hands to Heaven, etched on the  
deep,  
Clear sky like gray priests lost in praise.

The trees are lovely when the budding leaves  
Spring from their winter slumber ; when the  
frost,

With cunning hands, from rainbowed jewels  
weaves

    Their autumn robes, with golden 'broidery  
    crossed.

But on the winter heavens, cool and gray,

    Slim shadows on a dusky background thrown,  
Seen from my study-window, day by day,

    These mere outlines a fairer sight have  
    grown.

## NEW YEAR GIFTS.

GREET we the New Year now,  
Reverent before him bow,  
Taking his gifts. He stands,  
Filling the empty hands  
Longing toward him we reach ;  
Something he gives to each.

Fair are the hopes some hold ;  
Future achievements bold.  
Truths they shall reach, shine out  
Stars in their sky. No doubt  
Spreads its black wings and starts,  
Waking to life their hearts.

Courage and strength to some,  
Victories new shall come ;  
Magic of friendship give  
Hearts renewed joy to live ;

Love, angel guest, bestow  
Glimpses of Heaven below.

Some of the outstretched arms  
Fills he with strange alarms,  
Vague, unknown doubts and fears ;  
Some he gives only tears,  
Failure, and dark-browed Care,  
Sorrow, and gray Despair.

False friends and faith betrayed ;  
Ideals and dreams that fade ;  
Partings with woe replete ;  
Love robbed of all its sweet ;  
Temptations keen, and pain ;  
Sin's dark, unholy stain.

Some to an untried strand  
Points he with gentle hand.  
Blest ye the New Year's voice  
Calls from life's pain ! Rejoice !  
Hearts where he entereth,  
Bringing the gift of death !

## THE NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

### I.

I HEARD the New Year's footsteps echo clear  
Outside my open door, and dreading lest  
He enter there—a most unwelcome guest !  
(A true strong friend had been the sweet Old  
Year)

“ Turn back ! ” I cried, “ you shall not pass me  
here

Except you make my friend exceeding blest  
With whatsoever gift you know is best  
Of all you bring.” He smiled, and drew more  
near,

A steady sweetness in his gentle eyes :  
“ Be satisfied,” he said, “ a wondrous gift  
I bring your friend ”—and crossed my threshold  
swift

As when a lightning-wingèd arrow flies



Far from the bow's tense string—then cried,  
“ But sift  
My meaning well if thou wouldst be most  
wise ! ”

## II.

A wondrous gift ! The best of all his store !  
O happy friend ! what will he do for thee ?  
What worthy of thy favor bring ? Would he  
Give back the strength that pain hath weak-  
ened sore,  
Content were I,—I would not ask for more.  
Sweet health ! sure, this the wondrous boon  
must be  
The glad New Year for love's sake promised me  
When first I met him at my chamber door.  
He brought thee death instead. O gift di-  
vine !  
Outglowing love's fair wishes for her own.  
With eager, lavish hand I would have thrown  
Life's purple clusters at our friendship's  
shrine ;  
He spilled their precious juices, and alone  
Left there death's dregs, more sweet than all  
life's wine.

## THE SALE OF THE PIG.

OCH! Biddy, 't is bad news I 'm bringin',  
Wid sorrow my heart 's fit to break ;  
The docther is wantin' his money,  
The rint will be due in a wake.  
But worse than all this, Biddy darlint,—  
A cruel and heart-rindin' blow !—  
“ What's that which has hurt me ? ” ye're askin',  
Shure ! Biddy, the pig must go !

For Kitty, you know, has the maisles,  
And Jim, the poor colleen ! so bad  
The docther has said if we keep 'im,  
We must have fresh air fur the lad.  
The babby, too, she has been ailin',  
And now her recovery 's but slow ;  
A change must be made fur the wee wan,—  
So, Biddy, our pig must go.

All day I 've been thinkin' of, Biddy,  
The counthry so grane and so swate,  
And in my ould head I 've been plannin'  
Arrangements quite trim and compleate.  
You, darlint, must take all the childhurs,  
(New life upon them 't will bestow !)  
And go from the city to mither's ;  
But piggy to death must go.

A snug, tidy cottage has mither,  
As purty as iver ye see,  
There 's only wan room besides two, dear,  
But that is enough space fur ye.  
My mither has two little gardens,  
Where praties and posies both grow,  
And glad will she welcome the childhurs,—  
So, Biddy, the pig must go !

I hate, dear, to part wid the crathur,  
Perhaps, he 's a throifle too blunt ;  
But oft I have killed me wid laughin',  
A-listenin' to his plazed grunt.  
In faith ! he 's the winnin'est baste, woife,  
Amongst all the pigs that I know ;  
But to the starved knife of the butcher,  
Dear Biddy, our pig must go.

He 'll fetch a pile of good money,  
He 's growin' now fat and so big;  
Ye 'll feel when away fast ye travel,  
Ye 're ridin' away on the pig!  
Don't let the young childhurs forget, woife,  
What to the dear crathur they owe,  
Since off to the blissed, grane counthry,  
'T is piggy allows 'em to go.

We 'll lave the nate hut by the railroad,  
Wid pig-pen as good as the bist,  
For I can get wurrk in the city,  
And board there as chape as the rist.  
Whisht, Biddy! ye plaze to spake aisy!  
Ye say ye 're not laving me so?  
That I shall not sthuggle on lonely,  
While away on the pig ye go?

Faith! darlint, mesilf 't is that 's longin'  
To see you again like a rose;  
Yure eyes, wunst the brag of ould Ireland,  
Again their ould sparkles disclose.  
Whisht, Biddy! have done wid your talkin'!  
Indade! I would have me woife know,  
The hilth of the childhurs is precious—  
So you and the pig must go!

## COMPENSATION.

YOU say his life is barren.

I well know

That there are heights he is forbid to climb,  
And summer paths his feet shall never tread ;  
And there are visions sweet which ne'er to him  
Shall grow realities.

Does he not know

The worth of love that careless passes by  
His longing heart another's life to bless?  
Is not the poet's world more grand to him  
Who is condemned the dullest prose to live,  
Than 't were if he should so accustomed grow  
To sweetest harmony his soul might fail  
To catch the cadence of the melody?

None see so far as he to whom life's gifts  
Of richest worth are evermore denied.

The snow-capped mountains far more grand  
uprear

Their lofty heads to dwellers in the vales ;  
And he who weary treads the desert, deems  
Each flower more dear than he whose gardens  
fair

Burn incense to the sunshine.

Such his life—

A hopeless striving 'gainst a sturdy fate ;  
A reaching out for what is ne'er attained ;  
A gain of dust and ashes.

Yet the man

Whose soul has never known the depths of  
pain,

Can never reach the tempting heights of joy.

Would power, or love, or happiness divine,  
Atone to him for change in his own strong

Yet tender soul, which, like Æolian harps,

Responds with melody to touch of joy,

Or when Pain sweeps the strings, or Love  
brings forth

The harmonies that—most sweet—sleep with-  
in?

Speak thou, dear friend, and tell the happy  
—No !

## THE HEART OF A FLIRT.

THERE is a castle strange, Constance,  
    (Oh ! ask not whose or where !)  
Its marvels wisest minds entrance  
    Of all who enter there.

Within are treasures rare, *ma belle* ;  
    A crown of moonbeams pale,  
A star from heaven that shining fell,  
    And clustering snow-flakes frail.

Arrows of love ; a siren's song ;  
    A plume from Time's swift wing ;  
Will-o'-the-wisps to lead men wrong ;  
    And swans who, dying, sing.  
There cold stones weep unfeignèd tears,  
    And gather moss when rolled ;  
The grim walls have no listening ears ;  
    And all that gleams is gold.



An honest lawyer there I saw  
    Charge but a modest fee ;  
A politician's conscience draw  
    Astonished crowds to see ;  
The present moment held for aye ;  
    And ideals realized ;  
And secrets kept for many a day ;  
    And love of poor men prized.

Within those walls I saw amazed  
    Keen slander's venom'd shaft  
That left no sting ; and fire which blazed,  
    But did not burn ; and laughed  
To find locked fast in crystal case  
    Hearts brok'n that naught could cure :  
" Hands off " was writ above the place  
    Of love that would endure.

Most wonderful of all I met  
    Behind those golden bars,  
I found the heart of a coquette,  
    Disfigured with old scars ;  
'T was written full of lovers' names,  
    Dismissed long years ago,



And filled with ashes of dead flames,  
Whence new loves spring and glow.

Of all those treasures rare, *ma belle*,  
Of nature and of art,  
And half their worth I ne'er could tell,  
I covet that one heart.  
Is it worth while I question, Sweet,  
For this one's self t' exert,  
Fling life and soul beneath your feet,  
To win—the heart of a flirt ?

## TELL-TALE EYES.

I THINK of eyes upturned to me  
(The star-sweet eyes upturned to me),  
Steeped in the warmth of summer nights,  
Of star-gemmed, sweet-breathed summer  
    nights  
    Unfathomed, deep as midnight skies,—  
                    Dark eyes !

I dream of eyes upturned to me  
(The dew-wet eyes upturned to me),  
Like darkest purple pansy-blooms,  
Like dew-dropped, wet-eyed pansy-blooms,  
    A hint of tears unshed there lies,—  
                    Soft eyes !

I see in eyes upturned to me  
(The glad, gray eyes upturned to me),

Faint lights from luminous tender dawns,  
From glad-flushed, gray-lit, tender dawns,  
    Greeting the world with sweet surprise,—  
                    Clear eyes !

I read in eyes upturned to me  
(The love-brimmed eyes upturned to me),  
Confessions dear to passionate hearts,  
To love-stirred, brimmed-full, passionate hearts,  
    Of love that e'er the tongue denies,—  
                    Rapt eyes !

I look in eyes upturned to me  
(The soul-strong eyes upturned to me),  
My rapturous yearning hushed to calm,  
My soul-deep, strong love hushed to calm,  
    To her white heights rebuked I rise,—  
                    Grave eyes !

Her fresh young heart lies bare to me  
(The sweet girl-heart lies bare to me),  
Its dainty fancies, budding dreams,  
Its sweet-voiced, girl-faced, budding dreams,  
    Swift from its rest 't would trembling start,—  
                    Poor heart !

Did she but know 't was bare to me  
(The tremulous heart was bare to me),  
O Love ! if I should breathe one word,  
One tremulous, burning, passionate word,  
    'T would strike through it a wounding dart,—  
                                    Sweet heart !

But the girl-heart laid bare to me  
(The proud, wild heart laid bare to me),  
Would crush and kill with bitter scorn,  
With proud-souled, wild-eyed, withering scorn,  
    Should her love's rose be torn apart,—  
                                    Brave heart !

## CLOUDLAND.

THE glow of the skies in the even,  
The mists of the dawn,  
Veil soft from my eyes the dear heaven,  
And friends who are gone.

I used when a child oft to wonder  
If, back of the blue,  
Clear turquoise was piled up just under  
The light peering through.

The clouds hid from view cities shining  
I mournfully dreamed,  
And longed to look through their gold lining  
To where the streets gleamed.

More fair than the sky soft they glimmered  
Behind the clear glow,

Where clouds heaped on high faintly shimmered  
Like cities of snow.

When autumn's cold breezes fast drifted  
The leaves from on high,  
In sadness the trees then uplifted  
Their arms to the sky.

As though they were praying th' immortals  
For some angel good  
To lead past the day's cloudy portals  
These babes of the wood.

On earth the sweet pansies were blighted—  
All blossom and bloom,—  
My heart still with fancies was lighted  
For now their perfume

Was rich, so it seemed, in the bowers  
Of worlds ever bland ;  
The souls, so I dreamed, of the flowers  
Had gone to Cloudland.

Though voiceless and drear were the woodlands  
Where birds once had sung,

Their melodies clear in the cloudlands  
In fancy now rung.

When closed my dear little babe brother  
His eyes evermore,  
His soul seemed to flit like another  
Winged bird to that shore.

And oft when uplifted the uncertain  
Vague veil of the place,  
I caught thro' the rifted cloud-curtain  
A glimpse of his face.

I watch still, while grows the day dimmer,  
The sky in the west  
Lit up by a rosy pale shimmer,  
And into my breast

Steals gently a peace long unwonted;  
Again they seem truth,  
The dreams that unceasingly haunted  
The heart of my youth.

I think of a mist-land diviner,—  
Death's chasm once crossed—

Where blessings exist, greater, finer,  
Than those we have lost.

There glorious surge the ambitions  
Which once stirred our souls,  
Desires shall merge in fruitions,  
Where Progress controls.

The love of which fate has bereft us,  
The smile and the kiss,  
And sympathy wait which have left us—  
All comfort we miss.

Again shall dear arms glad enfold us  
In tender embrace ;  
Against all that harms safely hold us  
With love's simple grace.

Alas ! the old fear has now locked the  
Fair gates from my view,  
Again has a mirage but mocked me ?  
A vision untrue ?

Doubt's mists, dim and strange, darkly lower  
Before my rapt gaze,  
Ah, God ! for the angels' keen power  
To pierce through the haze !



## SHUT IN.

O TALL fair hills, touched by the sun's warm  
glow !

Can I not press beyond ye ? Still ye stand  
Like giant sentinels, a blue-robed band,  
To guard the valley's treasure-fields below.  
Or like strong prison-walls ye seem that hold  
Life out. Your shade lies heavy on my  
brain ;

My freest thought ye stifle, and I fain  
Would leave behind your farthest rim of gold.  
I care not for your beauty, though the Day's  
Rose-flush transfigured shows ye, and the  
Night

Drapes round your curves a veil of silver haze.  
What boon are they, yon shining peaks of  
light ?

The broad world lies beyond, with proud suc-  
cess

And strong new growth my poor, starved life  
to bless.

## THE SMITTEN RIVIERA.

THE famed Riviera one evening gazed  
With pride on her cities old,  
And smiling in beauty, exulting praised  
Her graceful curved coasts and her moonlighted  
bays  
Whose breasts were a-shimmer with gold.

She laughed as the sound of the revellers'  
sport,  
Betokening freedom from care,  
Came ringing from Nice, a bombarded fort,  
Where flowers were missiles, and Pleasure held  
court,  
And melodies filled the air.

Was that the wind wailing through nodding  
trees?  
Or cries from some pain-stirred souls?

A sigh in the streets of an errant breeze?  
A gale from the surge of the rising seas?—  
A sound through the thrilled air rolls!

It swells to a groan, drawing near, more near,—  
A groan from the tortured Earth,  
With sharp, sudden pang, and a spasm of fear,  
In travail 'midst darkness and shadows drear,  
She 's giving a monster birth!

It deepens,—it grows to a terrible roar!—  
Prometheus, wild with pain,  
A vulture of flame at his brave heart's core,  
Is seeking to break from his thralldom sore,  
And burst the iron links of his chain.

A rumble!—a roar like hoarse thunder-peals!—  
The shores with the burden grieve;  
A shudder of anguish through Italy steals,  
A tremor!—a thrill!—and the mad world reels,  
And sobs her deep bosom heave.

And crashing a hundred fair buildings break  
Through the night, and with souls aghast,  
The slumbering people in terror wake

And shriek as they see their church-spires shake  
And tremble like trees in a blast.

The ruined Riviera in sadness quailed  
At the wrecks of her marble domes,  
At sight of her tottering cities paled,  
And crouched in the dust of her mansions  
wailed  
For her beautiful broken homes.

O desolate, storm-stricken region ! crushed  
With woe to the throbbing ground !  
At night : with the pride of her cities flushed ,  
At dawn : with the voice of her triumph  
hushed !  
The Queen of the Sea uncrowned !

## BATTLE-FIELDS.

*“ Ce n'est pas la victoire que fait le bonheur des nobles  
cœurs ; c'est le combat.”*

WHEN musing on some hard-fought battle-  
field,  
The soul, a victor stands, its thoughts are not  
Of triumph, nor of power, for the heart,  
Unnerved now danger's past, remembers more  
The pain, the struggle, and the awful cost  
Of conquest. Here an evil thought was slain,  
And there a passion vanquished, but the scars  
Remain to tell how bitter was the strife.

There lies a foe 't was hard to fight, for once  
He was a friend ; and here the enemy  
Was self. An agony as old as breath  
In this place sobbed its last, and here a love  
Was slain, but almost took life with it.

Ah !

The soul dreams not of triumph, for fierce  
ghosts

Of murdered passions haunt the battle-field  
To mock his victory ; and Love sends forth  
Pale, pleading couriers with reproachful eyes  
To ask : “ How could you slay so fair a thing ?

Not on the heights of victory, glory-flushed,  
Brave souls are happiest. Not when the foe  
Lies trodden 'neath the foot. Not when the  
slain

No longer shriek defiance ! But when roused  
By need of warfare, in the battle's midst,  
Each nerve a bow-string tense, each breath a  
dart.

'T is when the hosts of evil marshal near,  
Bent on the soul's destruction, that it burns  
With fierce joy born when strength embraces  
strength.

It is in combat that our souls grow strong.

And if we fail ? Why ! failure may be grand  
If souls have striven truly. Struggle on !  
The day may yet be won, and if we lose,

Our souls have grown more strong to fight  
again.

“He fought and failed !” Oh, lying epitaph !  
Defeated? Yes! but if he bravely fought,  
He could not fail, for God oft calls that gain  
Which we, short-sighted, count ignoble loss.

## IMMORTALITY.

A BEAUTIFUL thought the Father sent, a boon  
to the sin-tossed earth,  
Where evil and pain held mastery,—to blossom and grow in dearth  
Of love that made its home in heaven so wondrous sweet and pure.  
“Go ! teach the world,” the Father said, “the things that will endure  
When sin and self are vanquished, and God’s love and man’s combine  
To make of earth a paradise, and human hearts divine.”

“A voice I must have,” said the beautiful thought, “a voice that is sweet and strong,  
Whose marvellous melody will reach all hearts in the listening throng.”



Into a minstrel's idle brain the thought in silence crept,  
And eagerly he seized his harp, while master fingers swept  
From out the sensitive, quivering strings a noble, heavenly strain,  
Where longing merged into content, and joy was linked with pain.

And ever between the mournful chords a soft refrain of hope,  
For hearts whom Doubt holds captive in the darkness where they grope  
To reach the steadfast light, stole out and bore the wondrous thought  
To weary men and women who but selfish interests sought.  
To listen to the music rare, a few hearts eager turned,  
But carelessly the listless crowd the tender message spurned.

And next it flew where an artist toiled, and guided his faltering hand,

Until he embodied this beautiful thought in  
depths of a picture grand.

The busy world a moment paused from sinfulness to heed

The work and give it shallow praise, for critics  
all agreed—

“’T was wonderful !—his light and shade—conception, too, was fine,”—

But few there were who saw or loved the inner  
thought divine.

From a poet then rang a thrilling song, for  
hope had inspired his soul ;—

“ Ah ! now they will listen ! ” the happy thought  
said, as into the crowd it stole.

But scarcely a ripple it made in life, though  
the poet sang loud and clear,

For men pushed on their own low aims, and  
never once paused to hear

The truth sublime that genius framed in rhythm  
free and bold,

For the heart and brain of the worn-out world  
were strangely dull and cold.

It stirred a philosopher’s Godlike brain ; ’t was  
voiced by a sweet-toned child ;

On breath of blossoms 't was carried abroad,  
and thundered from storm-clouds wild ;  
It jewelled a maiden's spotless soul ; and shone  
from a lover's eyes ;  
And grew in a mother's tender heart, made  
rich through sacrifice.  
But ever the heedless throng pushed on with  
suffering, shame, and sin,  
And never the soul of the weary world the  
beautiful thought could win.

Discouraged, the thought returned to God : " I  
have failed," it said, " to make  
The world take heed of thy comfort sent to  
the weary hearts that ache.  
Few souls would cease from sin or pain to list  
to my joyful word,  
And never one would take into his life the  
hope he heard.  
Disheartened I grew with each new trial in the  
wearisome years on earth ;  
Returning now with empty hands, nought has  
my toil been worth."

The Father then the despairing thought a mag-  
ical vision gave :

And first it saw a woman stand beside a dead  
love's grave.

She dug it deep in her own sad heart, and  
buried the slain love there ;—

A thrill of pity stirred the thought, when—lo !  
upon the air,

The old sweet strain from the minstrel's harp  
rose clear and trembling fell,

And the woman smiled and murmured low,  
“ He doeth all things well.”

And then in a gallery, art-enhanced, the thought  
saw a painting hung,

Whose meaning deep uplifted the soul like the  
song that the minstrel sung.

And one there was in the careless crowd, who  
reverently held his breath,

Before the glimpse that the picture gave of the  
mystery of death.

It haunted his heart as he toiled that day  
and crowded the demons out,

Till Faith was enthroned a king in his soul in  
place of the tyrant Doubt.

And over the world it roamed again, the won-  
dering, awe-struck thought,

And found that to many a lonely one new  
strength had its poem brought ;  
It went like a talisman to protect where the  
serpent of evil coiled ;  
And heard its own voice from lips of a child  
keep a soul from the world unsoiled ;  
And never a breath had it spent in vain, but  
each had enkindled some heart  
With its heaven-born hope, till the beautiful  
thought had grown of all life a part.

## THE SWEETEST JOY OF HEAVEN.

### I.

I DREAMED last night that I awoke and found  
That I had died ; and with a slow, dull ache  
Within my heart, I rose and wandered 'round  
Disconsolate, while listening to the sound  
Of bitter tears, slow-dropping to the ground,

Drawn from the hearts unhappy for my sake,  
I, all-unconscious, left alone to break.

“ O Death ! ” I cried, “ how can I now forsake  
My best-loved ones ? For years I 've stood  
beside

Them, loving them, though mute in helplessness

Before great pain and loss, which oft I tried  
To soothe, in vain,—not mine the power to  
bless,

I was so weak,—and now I, too, have died,  
And my loved ones again are comfortless.”

II.

But as I moaned, a joyful knowledge grew  
Of some divine new strength which I pos-  
sessed

To comfort my belovèd. So I threw  
My clinging arms about them, and I drew  
Them back from that cold, frosty thing I knew  
Had once been I. My dear ones never  
guessed

That it was I who soothed them into rest  
And brought new courage to each weary  
breast;

But I a wonderful, sweet thing had learned,  
For all my earth-wrought woe a glorious  
meed,

The hearts above whose pain I hopeless  
yearned

On earth, I had grown strong to help. No  
heed

I took of other joys, but from all turned,—  
For more of Heaven than this no soul has  
need.



## BUTTERFLIES.

IN an easy-chair, half-sleeping,  
Book slow-dropping from his hold,  
Sat a poet, vigil keeping,  
When the day was growing old,  
And the twilight's misty curtain softly, silently unrolled.

Dreaming there in poet fashion,  
Rhythms dancing through his brain,  
Rapt in inward exaltation,  
Heedless for the hour of pain,  
Earthly shackles seemed removed ; spirit only there held reign.

Then a lady from the growing  
Shadows deep'ning round him there,  
Stepped into the fire-light glowing,  
With a gracious winning air ;  
Shone her eyes like opals softly 'neath the  
brown braids of her hair.



Cried the dreamer : " Sweetest vision  
Of a poet long years dead !  
Comest thou from fields elysian  
Whence my thoughts have oft been led  
When in ecstasy thy verses, pure and holy, I  
have read ? "

Musically the lady answered,  
In a tender, restful tone,  
Which the poet almost fancied  
Was an echo of his own  
Rhythmic numbers that had haunted him  
while sitting there alone.

Eager asked he many a question  
Of that wondrous spirit strand ;  
Naught his heart had found to rest on  
In this dreary mortal land,  
And he longed to pierce death's shadows and  
their meaning understand.

Heaven, she told him, seems a newly  
God-made earth, but glorified ;  
There the dead live on so truly  
That it seems not they have died :  
Ever baffled as he strove to grasp her mean-  
ing, low he cried :

“ Tell me what in Eden greeted  
First your wondering, wistful eyes?  
What life’s half-learned truths completed?”  
Then she answered : “ Butterflies ! ”  
Disappearing, left the poet filled with  
thoughts of paradise.

Fancies fleet to heaven winging,  
Free from desperate doubt’s control,  
While her sweet words still were ringing  
In the silence of his soul ;  
Trusting, hoping, as in boyhood, his glad  
thoughts in measures stole :

*O beautiful type  
Of spirits grown ripe  
For life made divine !  
This dark heart of mine  
Your teaching receives,  
Life endless believes,  
No more for Death grieves.*

*His skeleton hand  
Unfastens the band  
That holds us to earth.  
The soul in new birth*

*Soars upward to bliss.  
Think you it will miss  
Its worn chrysalis ?*

*In God's gardens blest  
Its bright wings will rest.  
Sweet welcomes wait there  
From Love's blossoms fair,  
Transplanted by Death,  
Who chills by his breath,  
But life perfecteth.*

And the poet's soul expanding  
With a sense of deathlessness,  
To these insects (understanding  
Fully now life's endlessness)  
Ever turned in doubting moments with a  
new-born tenderness.

## SOME DAYS.

SOME days there are when life and love  
Seem best of gifts from God above ;  
Some days when sky and sun and sea  
Bring sweetest thoughts of life to me ;  
Some days heart-aches but trifles seem,  
And haunting care an idle dream—

Some days.

But clouds may hide the bluest sky,  
And tears 'neath softest lashes lie ;  
Strong winds make rough the smoothest sea,  
And crash to earth the tallest tree ;  
Though light the woes that to us fall,  
The pain of others saddens all—

Some days.

## THE COAL DIGGER.

IN a stifling pit a miner worked,  
    Beneath the light of the golden day,  
Where the noisome gas and fire-damp lurked  
    Like stealthy beasts in his narrow way.

Like a grimy Cyclops the miner seemed,  
    One round eye throwing an evil light,  
For the lamp on his forehead redly gleamed  
    In the shadowed depths of the pit's mid-  
        night.

He drove his sharp pick in the mountain side  
    To bring black jewels from settings dim.  
The coal is the diamond unpurified,—  
    A truth which never had come to him.

The wide-loving Father has taught in the coal  
    And flash of the gem, in substance the same,

The elements Godlike that dwell in each soul,  
Though one has glory and one has shame.

The miner but thought in his vague, dull way,  
Of his fading wife and his children three,  
And if there were bread for another day,  
Since a soulless clod of the earth was he.

Of the giant trees he never thought  
Which once to the sun waved tufted heads,  
Where the wondrous change had since been  
wrought  
That formed the massive rich coal-beds.

He did not know that once just there  
Great forests of ferns began to grow  
And spread their fronds to the tropic air ;  
For his brain was dull and his fancy slow.

'Neath his echoing blows the coal broke  
through,  
And burst from the solid, glistening wall,  
But he simply remembered the rent was due,  
And would swallow the most of his earnings  
small.

A loaded car down the dark crept past,  
Like a long, black hearse for a moment seen ;  
But never a glance the miner cast,  
For what was he but a mere machine ?

And patiently dull the man toiled on  
For home and children and fading wife,  
Till his limbs were cramped and his strength  
was gone,  
But he hardly dreamed of a fuller life.

One day the gas and the fire-damp grim,  
Wild, hungry beasts that had waited long,  
Leaped quick at his throat and throttled him  
With the horrible might of their hatred  
strong.

And people read in a careless way,  
When his stupid, poor heart-strings lay  
chilled :

“A slight explosion occurred to-day,  
But only a digger of coal was killed.”

But I think in the Spirit-World he will learn  
The beautiful things that escaped him here,  
For the heart of the Father must surely yearn  
O'er one condemned to an earth-life drear.



His brain will be filled, and his soul grow  
broad,

In the wondrous light of Heaven's day,  
It could never be meant by a loving God  
That he should be always a lump of clay.



## SEPARATION.

DEAR, tender hands that somewhere on God's  
earth

Seem cold and empty, barred from clasp of  
mine,

That reach out longing after it, in dearth  
Of other help ; my hands have need of thine.

Strong hands ! that would have helped me in  
my need,

That never would have put me careless by ;  
Kind hands ! I know that many a loving deed  
Would cheer my weary days were you but  
nigh.

Sometimes I dream, dear hands, that once  
again

The magic of your touch may thrill my  
heart,

The joy of meeting exorcise my pain,  
E'en though again our lonely paths must  
part.

No more? Would not the clasp of hands un-  
lock  
The silent portals of the lips, and words—  
Passionate words—so long repressed, then  
flock  
To speech, as breaks the dawn with song of  
birds?

Ah, dear! I could not bear it. Sundered wide  
Our paths still lie. Why should we try to  
reach  
Across the gulf? Why let the pent-up tide  
Of silent years break forth in useless speech?

And so I pray, dear hands, that touch of thine  
Shall ne'er before sweet Death's triumphant  
hour,  
With soft caress, near cheek or hand of mine,  
Until I lie too cold for passion's power.

Then once, just once, dear hands, when mine  
are cold

And stir not at your coming, gently take  
The frozen fingers in your living hold,  
An instant clasp them, for the old troth's  
sake.

## AND YET.

I WISH we could stay just lovers, dear!

My heart with vague doubts is beset ;  
The skies of our future star-dotted appear,  
Our souls must grow ever more blessedly near,  
And yet—

'T were folly to think that you could grow cold,  
Or I become selfish and fret,  
Indifference tarnish our happy love's gold,  
Our hearts with our faces grow withered and  
old,—

And yet—

I wish that the world would just stand still,  
And keep us, as now, in love's net ;  
The years that are coming so hurriedly will  
In glorious perfection our rose-dreams fulfil,—  
And yet!

## AND YET.

WE have loved and forgotten our loving ;  
But *you* would remember again ?  
Could you take up the threads we have broken,  
And weave them together,—what then ?

Could the trust that 's the life of true loving  
Exist once again for us two ?  
Are you certain that *I* would be faithful ?  
Or sure that to me you 'd be true ?

Can you take from the rose its rare perfume,  
And bid the bloom still be as sweet ?  
Will the germ that is touched by the Frost  
King  
Spring up into golden wheat ?

Who shall wake from the harp sweet music,  
If tuned to a silent string ?  
Can the bird that is hurt by the hunters  
Fly far on a broken wing ?

But our love?—'t is a rose that 's faded ;  
A thorn that is left in its stead ;  
Just a shadow that 's thrown on the grasses ;  
The ghost of a passion dead.

Do you seek from the grave to call it ?  
I tell you it died long ago.  
There 's no throb of life through its pulses,  
Within its dulled eyes there 's no glow. '

And yet if we two *could* remember!—  
And if we could only forget!—  
Remember our troth—not its breaking;—  
Our love 's but a phantom—and yet!

## AN INTERLUDE.

LET us find only joy in the world to-day,  
    No room for regret,  
We will push this dull pain from our hearts  
    away,  
And the phantoms which shadow our lives  
    for aye,  
Forget, dear, forget.

Who can know whether God, in his might, will  
    bring  
    Our souls close again?  
When the years shall unclasp the cold hands  
    that cling,  
Though each one unto each is life 's dearest  
    thing,  
What then, love, what then?

We are hurried apart with relentless pace  
From dreams scarce begun,  
Shall we sorrow for putting thought by a space?  
Or regret any moment of Love's swift grace?  
Not one, sweet, not one.



## DIVIDED.

A SPIRIT there is in this silent place,  
In the hush of the evening still,  
It brings me, like stars from the wid'ning space;  
The wonderful smile on a cold, dead face,  
And a grave on a sunburnt hill.

My heart's lonely chambers it entereth,  
With the dear old familiar guise.  
I see, as I watch with a hurried breath,  
My darling, my darling, come back from death,  
With a smile in his tender eyes.

O Love ! could I reach thee and hold thee fast,  
Till my soul should grow strong and brave ;  
Redeem the mistakes of a worthless past,  
And climb to the heights where you stand, at  
last,  
But I never can cross that grave !

The sun, as it burns on those grave-sods deep,  
    Cannot lessen my life's strange chill ;  
Till Love is forgotten, and Pain asleep,  
That wonderful smile in my heart I 'll keep,  
    'Neath that grave on the wind-swept hill.

## TWO WOMEN.

Two lives there were, two restless woman lives,  
Full of sweet promises and chances fair,  
As every woman's life, ere pain deprives  
Her soul of all but that strange power to bear.

Both lives soon learned how love's divinest  
might  
Can bring more bliss than Heaven without  
love give ;  
And both were taught that Death's cold hand  
can blight  
Hope's tender blooms before they truly live.

Each lonely woman saw herself shut out  
From dear home-life, a woman's truest one,  
And felt age's binding cords were drawn about  
Her shrinking heart, before her youth was  
done.

To each the self-same choice was given then :  
    Upon the plains, where many hearts beat  
        time,  
To dwell ; or separated from the world of men,  
    Alone, the dreary mountain-peaks to climb.

One chose the valley's sheltered, safe retreat,  
    Where one who loved her gave her tender  
        care ;  
And baby-kisses kept her own lips sweet,  
    While all life centred in the home-nest there.

And who can blame the woman, that she chose  
    Life's warmth and color, ere her first love  
        burned  
To ashes ? Hearts need hearts ; and oh ! God  
    knows  
    Dear love is sweet, although but half-retained.

But from those heights she had not tried to gain ;  
    Down to the level of her life there swept,  
At times, a breath so pure that the old pain  
    And strong regret across her heart-strings  
        crept.

Oh ! once upon the mountain tops to stand,  
Where clouds and stars are comrades ; and  
to feel

Her soul no smaller, but know it as grand  
As aught of heaven the rifted skies reveal !

And one the mountains chose. O still, cold  
heights !

What joy have ye for hungry hearts ? Can  
stars

Be lovers ? Clouds be home ? Or pale, soft  
lights

From heaven be sweet as gleams from earth's  
rose-spars ?

She might have nestled in the valleys, too ;

But since her heart a love divine had known,  
She chose the weary heights, her soul too true  
To yield her life unto a lesser one.

But oft rose-lights would tint the mountain  
snow,

And children's voices mock her barren breast ;  
And yearning toward the valley's warmth and  
glow,

That half-love seemed of all past things the  
best.

## REFLECTIONS.

WITHIN a sluggish pool I saw a bank  
    Reflected, where coarse weeds and nettles  
        grew,  
    And glowing poison-berries that I knew  
Were deadly to the taste ; while grasses rank  
Leaned o'er the edge and of the waters drank.  
    But looking deeper, I beheld the blue  
    Of far-off heaven, and one stray bird that  
        flew  
Across the sky and to her nestlings sank.  
So in the soul of man I saw gross weeds  
    Of evil that had flourished, mirrored fair,  
    But safe beyond the sins white wings of  
        prayer,  
And gleams of heavenly light in noble deeds.  
    O friends ! look deep in every human soul,  
    And lo ! God's image glorifies the whole.

## TO MY CLOCK.

YOU tick so slow, my clock, so slow !

I watch your little hands glide round ;  
Like golden stars your wheels of brass  
Within their tiny orbits pass  
With musical, sweet sound.

I watch them through the crystal case,  
I watch your own round, patient face,  
Till half asleep I grow.

You tick so sweet, my clock, so sweet !

I see the dial's growing shade ;  
As moving o'er Chaldea's plains,  
The sun his western watch-tower gains.

I see the shadow fade  
From Ahaz' dial, when the priest  
Prayed God that backward to the East  
It might a space retreat.

You still tick on ! You still tick on !

I stand where Charlemagne's enthroned,

And hear his clock that measured time  
By water-drops escaping, chime  
    Its melody low-toned.  
I see King Alfred's candles burn  
While he looks up from books to learn  
    The day is nearly gone.

You tick so fast, my clock, so fast !  
    I see the farmers' faces brown,  
Within the hay-field turn to mark  
The shadows lengthen toward the dark,  
    While red the sun goes down.  
I see the house-wife's open door,  
And note upon the sanded floor  
    The stretch of shadow cast.

Oh, stay your hands, my clock, O, stay !  
    There lies the last new book unread,  
Neglected letters I must write,  
A poem should be sung to-night  
    That 's floating through my head !  
While I 've been idly dreaming here  
About the old time-pieces queer,  
    You 've ticked an hour away !



## MORNING-GLORIES.

THE moon in her pale, amber splendor,  
So patient, and tender, and true,  
Was lingering late in the heavens,  
And waiting the summer night through,  
For the kiss of her bold, ardent lover,  
The sun, who was coming, she knew.

Afar through the mists of the day-dawn,  
His gold-gleaming path she could trace ;  
The light which his radiant glances  
Reflected on her loving face,  
Shining forth in the shadowy midnight,  
Illumined the whole garden-space.

It shone on the poppies' red slumber ;  
It kindled the lilies with light ;  
It peeped in the eyes of the daisies  
Hid close 'neath the eyelids of white ;

And it climbed where the gay morning-glories  
Had slept through the long golden night.

A hush where the wire-winged insects  
That swiftly through gardens were  
From roses to violets flitting,  
Had ceased from their restless whirl ;  
And a wan, white light in the heavens ;  
A million green leaflets astir.

Soft breezes that creep thro' the garden ;  
A twitter from birds in their nest ;  
A breath through the bright morning-glories  
Waked them from their summer-night rest,  
Just to see the fair moon in her splendor  
Leap glad to the sun's glowing breast.

They looked for the moon's swift returning,  
Till closed their round eyes, every one,  
Discouraged and weary with waiting  
Ere half of the day's watch was done ;  
And the vine with its wealth of bright faces  
Turned ever away from the sun.

So only one glimpse of her glory  
The blooms on the trellises had ;  
They slept while she reigned in the heavens,  
In magical silver robes clad,  
And they waked just to see the moon vanish  
The heart of the sun to make glad.

So ever we seek for some treasure  
The joy of our lives to complete,  
But oft like the bright morning-glories  
Turn away from its presence sweet,  
Or wake just to see the gift vanish.  
And catch but a vision fleet.

THE END.



















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